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Forensic psychiatry in today's curriculum for general psychiatry in the Netherlands (Abstract)

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Forensic Psychiatry in today's curriculum for general psychiatry in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT**Introduction**

The interest in forensic psychiatry in today's general psychiatry curriculum is growing every year. Notwithstanding, there is still a practical gap in the perception of the need for specific expertise between forensic psychiatrists and their non-forensic counterparts. An explosive growth of delinquents with psychic problems in detention is paradoxically one of the basic causes of that gap.

Method

In this paper, questions about efficiency in today's curriculum for the general psychiatrist will be discussed. Firstly, attention will be paid to developments in the field. Then, opinions of the professionals (national and international) will be discussed. At the end, improvements to the general psychiatry specialisation curriculum of the Amsterdam/Geestgronden consortium will be proposed.

Results and conclusion

In everyday practice, forensic psychiatry is mostly identified with criminal law practice. In the Netherlands, there are 19 forensic psychiatric service departments (FPDs of the Ministry of Justice), around the country. 80 Psychiatrists are employed by this work unit. There is a country-wide harmonisation effort with protocols, guidelines and methods on how to work with what diagnostic instruments. There are also many forensic psychiatrists working in penitentiaries, giving consultation to thousands of delinquents with often serious psychiatric problems. In the community, striking a balance between dealing with problems of dangerousness and giving the best medical help has been subject of intensive debate in Dutch health politics in the last decades. The general psychiatrist's need for expertise in forensic psychiatry is primarily in learning the basics of law with regard to the patient's rights and of risk assessment and risk management. Practical clinical forensic expertise will be a basic need for the new generation of general psychiatrists, too. General and justicial health services are growing towards each other, that is certain.